

MONTANA STATEWIDE EPHT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING

January 26, 2006

(Next meeting to be scheduled in March 30th or April 13th
depending on the release of the next EPHT Request for
Proposals from CDC)
Met Net options will be made available

ATTENDEES

Helena:

Becky Bacon, DPHHS/Informatics
Amy Bamber, MT Dept. of Agriculture
Carol Ballew, DPHHS/Chronic Disease
Gary Carter, IHS
Sib Clack, DPHHS/MBOMS
Mary Lynn Donnelly, DPHHS/FCHB
Jim Edgar, DPHHS/Vital Stats
Sybil Govan, MT NRIS
Gail Gutsche, MT Legislator
Diana Hammer, US EPA
Roman Hendrickson, MD
Chris Korhonen, DPHHS/EPHT
Lou Olcott, DPHHS/Biomonitoring/Lab
Scott Straessler, MT NRIS
Dan Strausbaugh, ATSDR
Lisa Dickman, DPHHS

Bozeman MetNet:

Stephanie Nelson, Gallatin HD
Tim Roark, Gallatin, HD
Marc Schure, Gallatin, HD
Mike Vogel, MSU Bozeman

Butte MetNet:

Dan Dennehy, Butte-Silverbow HD
Mike Peterson, MT Tech
Dan Powers, Butte-Silverbow HD Dept

Missoula MetNet:

Alex Gorman, WVE
Dana Headapohl, MD
Sandra Kuntz, MSU
Kristin Nei, American Cancer Society
Chris Noonan, UM CEHS
Dick Paulsen, American Lung Assoc.
Diana Vanek, UM CEHS

Special Guests:

Chris Deveny, Consultant
Mosey Hardin, EPHT Intern UC Santa Cruz
Lance Gable, Georgetown University/Center for Law & Public's Health
Larry Gostin, Georgetown University/Center for Law & Public's Health
Howard Reid DPHHS/ Food and Consumer Safety

EPHT Staff:

Marjean Magraw, Program Manager/Principal Investigator/EPHT
Chris Korhonen, Epidemiologist EPHT
Mosey Hardin, Intern EPHT
Sofia Cutcher, Health Planning Section Support

MEETING OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Provide updates on EPHT activities, new funding cycle planning, and evaluation results.
- ✓ Discuss legislative review and recommendation action steps.

- ✓ Summary of local EH assessments, special projects, and new sites selected.
- ✓ Share information.
- ✓ Summarize recommended next steps.

EPHT PROJECT UPDATES: Marjean Magraw gave a PowerPoint presentation providing updates on funding status (new RFP expected from CDC in February or March), current contractor activities, program evaluation completed in 11/2005, and current outreach efforts. The presentation is available on the website: epht.mt.gov under "Advisory Group/minutes" A summary of the responses to BRFSS questions related to EPHT in 2004 was provided by Chris Korhonen, program epidemiologist. A copy can be found on the website. Mosey Hardin provided a brief summary of the work she has done as an intern exploring environmental justice issues in Montana. She asked for interested members to contact her related to planning a workshop on EJ issues.

Analysis of EPHT Statues and Regulations and the Montana Code and Administrative Rules

Lance Gable, JD, LL.D and Lawrence Gostin, J.D., LL.D. provided an overview of the work they have done to review Montana public health law related to EPHT. As part of this work they also researched approaches taken in other states related to clarifying the authority to collect and use health outcome, exposure data, and environmental hazard data for EPHT. (A copy of their initial analysis is posted on the website)

DISCUSSION:

It was noted that DPHHS's authority to collect information according to PH law, is currently broad. Diseases that are listed specifically are communicable diseases not chronic but the term "diseases that impact public health" is used to provide broad coverage. For exposure data, (bio-monitoring) there is no explicit authorization of collection or use. (this is covered by IRB approvals at present on a case by case basis). The authority to collect specific environmental hazard data is provided to DEQ. There may be need at some to point expand the types of collection. This information can be public but trade secrets can be protected.

There was discussion of the need to give much consideration to any requests for changes in law. Lance pointed out that the benefits of having clear authority spelled out can prevent challenges down the road. Statute changes may not necessarily be needed, but authority could be clarified through regulation changes. Other discussion items were related to data privacy issues and the lack of the availability of hospital discharge data in Montana. Further discussions will continue.

PARTNER UPDATES

Kristin Nei of the American Cancer Society reported on the latest Montana Cancer Control Coalition activities. They are preparing to roll-out the cancer plan on April 7-8 with a news conference. At this time, they are seeking involvement/input from the public. Please refer to the [DPHHS Cancer website](#) for more information. The official implementation is scheduled for July.

Sib Clack of Montana's Birth Outcome Monitoring system (MBOMS), discussed the current suspension of the Montana Birth Outcome Monitoring system, which provided active case ascertainment of birth defects for 45 reportable conditions. The Maternal and Child Health block funding has been cut as well as the CDC's funding supporting birth defects registries in many states, including Montana. Funding for active surveillance is unavailable and passive surveillance from birth records leads to incomplete records.

Scott Straessler of MT's NRIS, has been working with Chris Deveny to provide training and resources to local health departments funded to conduct Community Health Assessments. An interactive County Health website is being refined and they are seeking feedback on website content (<http://nriss.mt.gov/epht/>).

Howard Reid with MT DPHHS's Food and Consumer Safety program is currently responsible for the DPHHS sport fish consumption advisory, which provides advice on fish consumption based on sampling and testing for mercury and PCBs conducted by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP). FWP and DPHHS will be updating consumption advisory materials this year using information from sampling completed in 2004. DPHHS works with the FWP to post signs at water bodies where mercury and PCB levels have been found to be high.

Montana EPHT hosts a monthly Fish and Contaminants Interagency Working Group which provides recommendations to fish advisory

publications. Marjean noted that the workgroup has helped partners collaborate on research projects and outreach. MSU Bozeman, College of Nursing is working with the WIC program and the Salish-Kootenai reservation to conduct an assessment of the knowledge of fish consumption advice among American Indian women on that reservation.

EH ASSESSMENTS, 2004-2005 FINAL RESULTS

(Please see Chris Deveny's PowerPoint for a summary of the results of the EH assessments conducted last year as well as special follow-up projects. Information was provided on new sites selected for mini-grants in 2005-2006.)

Related Research Updates:

UM Center for Environmental Health Science's Curtis Noonan, PHD provided a handout on studies underway related to environmental health at CEHS. Please see posted form, "Selected studies currently being conducted at Center for Environmental Health Sciences, University of Montana".

Mike Vogel of MSU Bozeman reported the results of a project conducted for EPHT to summarize radon levels found in homes from tests conducted across the state. A final report will be posted on the EPHT website in the next few weeks.

FOLLOW-UPS / FUTURE ACTIVITIES

1. A request to provide information on zoonotic disease surveillance activities in Montana.
2. Work towards planning an EJ workshop March or April. Contact Marjean Magraw (mmagraw@mt.gov) or Mosey Hardin (ehardin@mt.gov) to participate in planning efforts.
3. Next RFP for EPHT to be released in February or March 2006: information to be sent via email to Advisory Group members. Next meeting will be scheduled to solicit input.
4. MetNet: teleconference with Bozeman, Butte, and Missoula to be scheduled for next meeting.
5. Provide information on DPHHS cluster investigation protocol.